301 All the women and girls, except the slaves, wear a sort of cotton
291 hose which is woven onto the leg itself from above the ankle to the calf of the leg. This is extremely binding, especially when new. Above the calf they bind another band of the same material, also woven onto the leg, so that the calf is bulged from both sides. At the bottom of this hose is a border or hem two or three fingers wide made of reeds, or, like most of them, of tortoise shell. When this hose is new and wet, it hurts the women. They are careful to coat it on the outside with oil and annatto so that water will not penetrate. They wet themselves as little as possible. When they embark in
481 canoes, their husbands carry them. But you would never guess how they cross streams without wetting their legs. She who has the biggest or least uncomfortable hose, or even a man who has none, takes a woman by the feet and pulls her along after him or her while the one with the tight hose follows propped against his or her behind while walking on her hands.

[57] CHAPTER V

The Foods They Eat

262 I do not think there is a nation in the rest of the world which eats less well than this one, although they have here the means to eat well. But what is the difference since they are healthy, fat, and robust without these delicacies.

[231] They do not keep cows, sheep, goats, nor pigs, and they never eat them at home, although there are a great many pigs on Dominica; neither do they eat fowl, chicken eggs, butter, cheese, milk, oil,
● [263] or fat. They salt nothing when they eat among themselves. When they visit us, they eat almost anything, although those who have children abstain, as we shall see in the next chapter. At home, they eat tortoise and white tortoise eggs, but not the yellow ones, certain
252 birds, and crabs. They never cook well what they eat, especially the crabs. They cook the birds whole, after having burned the feathers, on small sticks arranged a little above the fire. Once cooked, they wrap them in leaves and smoke them. When they are ready to eat them, they hollow them out and boil them in manioc juice with

252 of water sucked out of a calabash. Nevertheless, during this process they wipe their hands on their buttocks, or use fresh grass which they find around them. [213] The sea worm is very slimy. The Caribs turn it over, suck the entrails and then throw the rest out. Sometimes
• 253 when they have nothing to eat they rub them in the ashes to clean off
252 the mucus and cook these sea worms and eat them. [69] They put into a small earthenware pot fine manioc flour, forty to fifty grains of pimento about as big as your thumb, scales and fish bones, and agouti bones which they have gnawed; they boil this all together in manioc water which is poisonous. This is their sauce and they dip their cassava into it when they have nothing else. It becomes so hot and tart that the strength of pepper comes up and makes their noses run as if they had taken the strongest mustard, and it makes them sneeze. Big tears come afterwards. The others who watch also weep, but it is because they laugh so hard. [109] They neither eat soup nor meat broth and have no other sauces than their tomali. [281]

262 The coubbeu is a tree which has a nut as big as the thumb, but it is round and the skin is like that of an acorn. When these nuts are yellow and ripe the Caribs gather them and broil them in order to shell them by rolling them on a hot plate. Next they are put in a basket and exposed to moisture and rain in order to make them rotten. Then the rotten nuts are kneaded into a paste on a plank made for this purpose. The paste is exposed to the sun which separates out the oil because it becomes extremely warm. After they draw off as much as possible this way they put the paste under a press in order to separate out the rest of the oil. [179]

274 The Caribs clear a place in the midst of the fire, or hearth, and here put in a whole leaf of tobacco. When it becomes well dried they press it between their hands and only the ribs remain; the part of the leaf already crumpled is then reduced to a powder. They mix this with some white ashes and with a little sea water. Having soaked it all together in this way they put a pinch between their lip and gum. Frequently they become faint because it is so strong, or they become intoxicated. This is, however, their ordinary way of taking tobacco. It causes them to spit excessively. After they have kept it in their mouth a long time they scrub their teeth with it, which makes them as white as ivory. [117]

262 fish both from rivers and from the sea. They never eat meat soup or other meat except a few birds which they throw into the fire without removing the feathers or entrails. When the feathers are almost singed off they take the birds out of the fire and smoke them and eat them. They don't eat milk, cheese, or butter and they hold eggs and oil in horror. This is said among them.

262 When they eat with us they are accustomed to eating our foods,
263 although there are some who are more scrupulous than the rest and don't wish to break their ancient customs. They don't use salt to season their food, and if they find grease they throw it out. They have only one common sauce made with fishheads and a large quantity of pimentos to which they add manioc water which loses its poison when it is boiled. They also add to the sauce mouchache which is obtained from manioc and is like the finest flour. They boil this attractive mixture. They dip their bread into it with much satisfaction and enjoyment, preferring it to the most exquisite meats.

264 Ordinarily they eat three times a day, but most of the time there is no rule for their meal and they eat when they are hungry and whenever they feel like it. The men eat separately in the great carbet. The women and small children eat in the small houses. They rest on their buttocks like monkeys sitting around a coui, which is half a calabash used like a dish, from which they eat all their food. Usually dogs and cats participate, but the children are careful to rap them on the muzzle with a stick when they rush in too quickly to the dish.

574 Among the Caribs there is always a deputy to welcome and take care of guests. When one of their friends comes to visit, this master of ceremonies brings him into the carbet and promptly hangs a hammock for him on which he tells him to sit. The guest does so immediately, maintaining his gravity and silence. Meanwhile everyone goes to some trouble to bring something to the newcomer. One woman brings him a drink, another bread, another crabs and fish or bourgaux [a kind of shellfish] and others bring similar things. When a guest is presented folded cassava it means he should eat only what is necessary for him. When it is presented to him unfolded it means that he should eat as much as he wishes and take the rest home with him. After eating and drinking well he says to his host "I am drunk." The master of ceremonies then brings everyone into the

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

224 Ciriques, a yellow-and-black species of land crab common in and around the reserve, make a very palatable dish. The green sperm of the male cirique is one of the ingredients of the typical Carib sauce, toumalin or tumali. They are usually caught at night with the aid of flambeaux. The Caribs sometimes obtain salt from the roasted and ground-up shells of these crustaceans by maceration and subsequent evaporation. Another and odd species of land crab, abounding in the woods and sometimes eaten by the Caribs, is the so-called soldier crab. When small, he finds and takes possession of a vignot, or river periwinkle's shell, exchanging this when he grows larger for that of a bugau (a snail-like sea shellfish), and that again, perhaps, for a lambi or conque shell. Scuttling along among the leaves, a seashell on their backs, their one claw sticking out behind and their two hairy horns in front, these "soldiers" present a truly comical appearance. Like the black crab of the leeward coast, the soldier is a great traveler, and at certain seasons battalions of them are to be seen on the march, going down to or up from the sea.

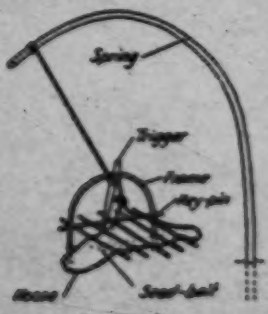

FIGURE 36.—Spring snares for game birds.

Iguana lizards are not uncommon in some parts of the woods. They have a delicate flesh whose taste resembles that of chicken. They are found on the branches of trees, hypnotized by whistling, and caught with a running noose tied to the end of a rod.

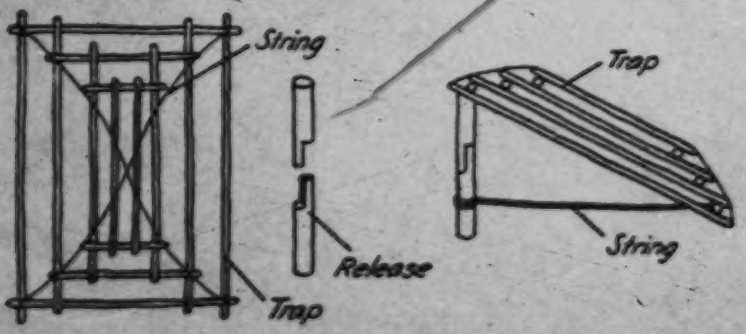

FIGURE 37.—Fall trap.

223 Two kinds of spring snares are made and used for catching birds: one for such small pilferers as sucriers, moissons, gros becs; another (fig. 36) for the succulent game birds known as perdrix or mountain dove, and tourterelle. A simple basketlike fall trap (fig. 37) is also used, as also birdlime, or rod and noose. The old Caribs are said to have caught

12: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1949
ST13 Callinago ST13

Later estimates are, for St Vincent: Philip Warner's "3000 Negroes and no other island as many Indians," and Stapleton's "1500 [warriors], 600 of these bowmen are Negroes," both taken from the Calendar of State Papers for the year 1676.[24] These figures may be compared with la Borde's estimated 4000 in 1700 for the two islands of Dominica and St Vincent together, i.e., after two attempts by the British under Stapleton in 1683 to exterminate the Caribs in both islands.

"The staple food of the *Carib* was the crab. . . . They roasted the meat, seasoning it with a sauce called taumalin, a mixture of lime juice and pounded peppers with the greenish meat next to the shell of the male crab. . . . For the seasoning of fish and meat they used a sauce called coui, which was made by boiling the juice of manioc with crushed peppers, lime juice, and manioc flour."[25] As the Carib word for food does not include fish, meat, or game, which may be called by a term meaning *food adjuncts*, crab—fond of it as the Caribs were and still are—cannot properly be called their staple food, which was and is cassava, a bread or bannock made from manioc meal. Incidentally, the manioc shrub is propagated by cuttings of two or three feet long taken from the stem of an old plant, and not, as Rouse would have it in speaking of the Arawak, from the root.[26] The Carib may have taken to citrus fruits before 1700, but neither the sauce which the modern Carib call [tumálē] in Dominica and [dumári] in Central America, nor that known to Breton as "tóma *sausse*, nitomáliem *ma sausse*," calls for the employment of lime juice as an ingredient. Breton says "it is so called because the women usually make it with tomali of crab, which is oily"; and he refers us to "cariouati *poivré*," where we find:

> They put into a little earthen pot together with mouchache [that is, manioc starch], forty or fifty peppers [*Capsicum frutescens*] as big as the thumb, fish-scales, fish-bones, or the bones of agouti which they have gnawed, boil the lot in manioc-water (which is poisonous), and that is the sauce in which they dip their cassava (when they have nothing else). . . .[27]

The name of this sauce has been incorporated into the English language as "toma'll (e) y, n. Soft greenish substance (called the liver) in lobster, used as sauce. (Carib)." (Concise Oxford Dictionary). Such sauce would naturally be served in the receptacle still known in the West Indies as a coui [kuí], and made from the half of a calabash (cujete)[27a] cut in two lengthwise. Although this is one

24 *Calendar of State Papers*, 1675-1676, no. 861, and p. 499.
25 *Handbook*, p. 550.
26 *Handbook*, p. 522.
27 Breton, *Dictionaire Caraïb-Français*, p. 109.
27a *Crescentia cujete.*

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

abortive fruits of *Theobroma cacao*, z'herbes balié, and the like) to promote a luxuriant growth. The fanlike blades or «heads» are used for thatch and the stems as thatching rods, screens, and lattice doorways. The ashes of burnt leaves are mixed with the sap from stems of balisier (*Heliconia* spp.) and juicy pulp of the genip (*Genipa americana*), and then are rubbed on the bodies of those suffering from yaws (*framboesia*).

Specimen citation: 3197.

Paspalum laxum Lamarck, Tabl. Encycl. 1: 176. 1791.
Paspalum glabrum Poiret in Lam. Encycl. 5: 30. 1804.
Chien-Dent.

This is a common coastal grass to be found in sandy or rocky soils throughout the West Indies.

Caribs place the whole plant in water which is then given as a drink to infants in order to hasten teething.

Specimen citation: 3309.

Saccharum officinarum Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 54. 1753.
kánise (from Spanish *caña*).

A native of southeast Asia cultivated in the tropics and subtropics of both hemispheres.

The growing of sugarcane was initiated in the West Indies early in the sixteenth century and the plant is now the most important product of many of the islands. Although unimportant in Dominica sufficient cane is grown to supply local demands.

Patches of sugarcane are to be found in the Carib Reserve and nearly every hut has in its surrounding yard a primitive single-post-and-lever-type of cane press with which to express the «vesou» or juice. The latter is used in place of refined sugar in cocoa, coffee, and for general cooking.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Vetiveria zizanioides (Linnaeus) Nash in Small, Fl. Southeast. U. S. 67. 1903.
Vetiveria arundinacea Griseb. Fl. Br. W. I. 559. 1864.
Andropogon zizanioides Urban, Symb. Ant. 4: 79. 1903.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

the chief native foodstuffs. They are usually boiled, rarely roasted, but in either case always in the green condition (unripe). The « popote » (i. e. the inflorescence bud) of this species or of the banana is crushed and its juice is applied as a cure for ulcers. Like those of the baliziers (*Heliconia* spp.) the leaves of both plantains and bananas are much used as wrapping material.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Musa paradisiaca Linnaeus subsp. **sapientum** (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 2: 892. 1891.

Banana. — Figue. — *bakáku*.

The distribution of the banana is identical with that of the plantain.

Bananas are hardly as important as plantains in the Caribs' diet, but they are an important commercial export crop in Dominica. A drink was formerly made from the fruit but today it is generally eaten ripe out of hand.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

ZINGIBERACEAE. Ginger Family.

Aframomum granum-paradisi (Hooker) K. Schumann in Engler, Pflansenreich 20: 213. 1904.

Grains-of-Paradise Amomum. — Poivre Guinée.

This African plant was originally described from Sierra Leone. Various species of this fragrant-leaved genus have pungent seeds which, in the Middle Ages, were a popular substitute for pepper. Today they are still used medicinally and as a flavoring agent (22).

Caribs frequently cultivate poivre guinée near their dwellings for they utilise the seeds as a spice. The leaves, considered to be a charm, are rubbed on the body when bathing and are constituents of a ritual bath (described under *Ocimum micranthum*) for unlucky canoes. A similar bath is given to their hunting dogs. A tea is made from the leaves for stomach ache and the seeds are put into rum as a « chauffe » to excite dogs.

Specimen citation: 121 (T), 3204.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

Formerly pimout

[814] was added instead of sugar. Small abortive pods (i. e. those which [263] turn yellow instead of maturing) are used as a constituent of a shampoo which supposedly promotes growth of the hair. The [302 534 372] wood is utilized in the construction of frames for drums (tambour basque), and was formerly used for fire drills.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

DILLENIACEAE. Dillenia Family.

Doliocarpus calinoides (Eichler) Gilg in Engl. & Prantl, Nat. Pfl. **3**: 114. 1893.

Corde d'l'Eau.

A stout liana inhabiting the mountain forests of Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Dominica, and Trinidad.

[272] This vine contains a pint or more of refreshing water which, on cutting the stem, is released and drunk by the Caribs. The species is rather rare and is known chiefly to hunters who say that one must sever the liana with one stroke else the water will mount up the cord.

Specimen citation: 37 (T).

GUTTIFERAE. Clusia Family.

Calophyllum brasiliense Camb. var. **antillanum** (Britt.) Standley, Tropical Woods **30**: 7. 1932.

Calophyllum antillanum Britton in Britton & Wilson, Bot. Porto Rico (Sci. Surv. Porto Rico & Virg. Isls. 5). 584. 1924.

Calophyllum calaba sensu Grisebach, Fl. Br. W. I. 108. 1859, as to Dominica citation.

Calaba, Galba, Maria, Santa Maria.

A West Indian tree found in Dominica at lower elevations.

This species is valued throughout the Antilles as a source of timber. Some of the big canoes of the Tainos of Cuba and Hispaniola were constructed from the wood of this tree.

[313] The hard, durable, reddish brown wood of galba is used by Carib (and Creole) for posts, furniture, and general construction purposes.

Specimen citation: 3199.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

quantity of seeds between the palms and scraping off the resultant paint with a piece of wood or with a knife. *Bíset* body paint was mixed with powdered charcoal (derived from the wood of bois chandelle, *Erithalis fruticosa*) to moderate its brilliance.

The roots of *Bixa orellana* are sometimes used to flavour meat or sauces. Sticks used as fire drills were made of annatto wood 'also from wood of bois la glu (*Sapium caribaeum*), bois chandelle (*Erithalis fruticosa*), maho noir (*Guatteria caribaea*), and cacao (*Theobroma Cacao*), etc.'. For further uses of *bíset* as an ingredient of ritual baths see *Ocimum micranthum* and *Ipomoea pes-caprae*.

Specimen citation: 3225, 3303.

PASSIFLORACEAE. Passion-Flower Family.

Passiflora foetida Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 959. 1753.

Mariguja. — *merékuia* (cf. Tupi *marakuya*), *lẽ méku* («monkey's genitals»).

This passion-flower occurs in Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, and throughout tropical South America. In Dominica mariguja occurs on waste stony ground, open slopes, or in hedgerows at lower elevations.

The fruit of this wild species is eaten by the Caribs, and the leaves are made into a «tea» said to be good for colds. The tea is used also to bathe people when they are weak.

Specimen citation: 3193.

Passiflora laurifolia Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 956. 1753.

Water Lemon — Liane Pomme, Pomme de Liane (name of fruit). — *merékuia* (cf. Tupi *marakuya*).

An oft-cultivated species of the West Indies and tropical South America. The pomme de liane is a common slender climbing vine most frequent in Dominica in thickets near streams at lower elevations, particularly on the windward coast.

Caribs peel the slender stems for use as a material in spiral basketry, in the same way that the lianas known as *mîbi* (*Anthurium palmatum* and *Monstera pertusa*) are employed. The fruits are edible.

Specimen citation: 108 (T), 2945, 3162, 3735.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

UMBELLIFERAE. Parsley Family.

[824] **Anethum graveolens** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 263. 1753.
Dill. — L'Anis.

A native of Europe, widely cultivated in gardens as a source of flavoring.

[263] Caribs have «borrowed» this plant from the Creoles and use it generally in flavoring. For another use of this species see *Annona muricata*.

Specimen citation: 3290.

Eryngium foetidum Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 232. 1753.
Chardon Beni («blessed thistle»). — *balié, baríé*.

A common weed throughout the American tropics on cultivated or waste land. Breton (7) early remarked about the peculiar fetid odor of this species which apparently has made the plant especially sought out for aboriginal medicine.

[278] A tea made from chardon beni is believed by the Carib to be a cure-all for sickness. Special teas are also made with chardon beni as a constituent. Thus a tea for colds is brewed from a mixture of chardon beni and caapi (*Ipomoea* sp.); an emetic tea for fever from a combination of chardon beni, three small limes, and tabac zombi (unidentified); a tea «to give heat to the stomach» (when something eaten has disagreed with one) from a combination of chardon beni, jampana (unidentified), and z'herbes charpentier (*Dianthera pectoralis* Juss.). For a further use of this species see *Ipomoea pes-caprae*.

Specimen citation: 3340.

SAPOTACEAE. Sapodilla Family.

Chrysophyllum argenteum Jacquin, Enum. 15. 1760.
Chrysophyllum glabrum Jacquin, Enum. 15. 1760.
Bois Calmite, Buie.

This Antillean tree occurs in Cuba and Hispaniola and on many of the Lesser Antilles.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

X824 Varieties of this species are cultivated for their fruits throughout the warm and tropical regions of both hemispheres.

[263] The Island Caribs generally cultivate pepper plants near their houses. The fruits are utilized both as a relish and for seasoning sauces. It is also said that the expressed juice of the fruit (dropped [278] into the eyes) was used formerly in cases of ophthalmia. Pounded pepper leaves, mixed with shark oil, are employed in the making of poultices for wounds and sores.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Nicotiana tabacum Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 180. 1753.

Tobacco, Tabac Pays. — *iúli*, *iúri* (w), *itámale* (m).

The tobacco plant, a native of tropical America is cultivated throughout the world.

[249] The Caribs grow this plant less today than formerly. Tobacco smoke is blown on ailing infants by midwives and other old women in order to make them well and strong. Tobacco juice is used as [278] an emetic, and was formerly drunk in dangerous quantities by [187] neophyte piai-men and candidates for chieftainship, both as a trial of endurance and «in order to see visions». Powdered to- [782] bacco [the leaves were dried near the hearth fire (7)] was burnt on the blade of a paddle as a propitiatory offering to the «Maitre Tête-Chien» (anthropomorphic chief of all tête-chiens, the local boa snake (*Constrictor orophias*) and other spirits. It was also [276] used as a narcotic (for pleasure) by placing a little powder or a dried piece of the leaf, together with wood ash and moistened with sea water, between the inner surface of the lip and the gum (7).

Specimen citation: 151 (T).

Solanum melongena Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 186. 1753.

Egg Plant. — Belongène.

The egg plant is apparently native to southern Asia, but was introduced early from Spain to America (21). It is now widely cultivated in all tropical and subtropical regions.

[262 Caribs grow this species for its fruits which they eat chiefly
252] in the boiled form. The plant is sometimes grafted on the weedy «batard belongène» (*Solanum torvum*).

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.